

Feminist Alliance for Rights - FAR

Highlights of Key Advocacy Points of FAR's Regional Partners

61st session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women:

Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work

March 13-24, 2017

The Feminist Alliance for Rights - FAR (formerly the Post-2015 Women's Coalition) is an international network of women's and social justice organizations engaging in global advocacy and with strong ties to local communities. In preparation for the 61st Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, FAR regional partners presented key advocacy points that reflect their grassroots work in relation to three thematic areas: economic and social rights; peace, safety and security; ending gender-based violence and defending women's sexual and reproductive health and rights; climate change, cultural, indigenous and land rights (<http://feministallianceforrights.org>).

This document is based on the perspectives of FAR members that represent regional women's and social justice organizations around the world, with the goal of amplifying intersectional feminist analyses and agendas from the Global South in international advocacy spaces.

1. Economic and Social Rights:

A very comprehensive document was produced by the Global Union Federations (GUFs) - Education International (EI), the International Trade Union Confederation and Public Services International (available at: <http://unioncsw.world-psi.org/news/joint-guf-statement-unions-central-women%E2%80%99s-economic-empowerment-changing-world-work>).

Some of the main points for advocacy are:

Women's economic empowerment: Advocate for the empowerment of women over economic resources, for participation in economic decision-making and for access to quality public services.

Protection and equality in work opportunities: Advocate to end inequality in employment opportunities for women, who tend to be concentrated in sectors such as domestic work, education, health and social care, hotel, retail, catering and cleaning services, textiles, and the agricultural sector, which are often precarious and unsafe. Defend equal pay and protection such as living wages, social benefits, paid sick leave, pensions, insurance, freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Compensation for unpaid work: Advocate for the recognition and economic compensation of women's unpaid work from which every society benefits, but is ignored in economic policies. Defend collective responsibility for these tasks and changes in social norms, including policies to prevent discrimination and labor exploitation.

End Gender-Based Violence: Advocate for policies to end all forms of violence, including physical, sexual and psychological abuse, domestic violence and harassment in the workplace. Defend the International Labour Organization's (ILO) policy for decent work as 'productive work for women and men in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity'.

Gender and education: advocate for all forms of gender stereotyping to be challenged and eliminated from education, and for public policies to address gender inequalities related to achievement, employment, recruitment and governance in education; defend access to quality public education at all levels.

2. Peace, Safety and Security

This topic is analyzed by femLINKpacific/GPPAC Pacific network. In the Pacific Islands region, femLINKpacific, as the Pacific Regional Secretariat for GPACC, works in collaboration with WACC Pacific, across the twenty-two Pacific Island countries and territories linking peacebuilders in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Maohi Nui, Tonga and Vanuatu (<http://www.femlinkpacific.org.fj/index.php/en/actions/policy-documents>):

The network contributed to the development and adoption of the Conflict Prevention Framework, Human Security Framework and the Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security to foster collaboration on gender, preventive action and human security in peace, early warning and early response (EWER) framework and an inclusive regional peace-building architecture.

To address the threats to human security, the organisation amplifies the call for gender equality, participation of youth, people with disabilities, and other marginalized groups, as well as consideration of governance structures, such as the Arms Trade Treaty, and the campaign for a Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific through a women-led Pacific community radio alliance and media network.

As the Pacific Island region continues to experience a series of intensifying and extreme weather patterns and natural disasters the organisation has been at the forefront of progressing the Women, Peace and Security agenda in all stages of disaster management.

Another topic prioritized by FAR members is the effect of financial counterterrorism measures on women's organizing, rights and gender equality worldwide. This analysis was produced by the Women Peacemakers Program (WPP), the Human Security Collective (HSC), WinG India and the Ecumenical Women's Initiative (EWI): (<https://www.womenpeacemakersprogram.org/assets/CMS/Resources/Reports/Policy-brief-CTM.pdf>).

Based on a survey of grassroots women's organizations worldwide conducted by WPP, as well as interviews by Duke IHRC and secondary research, the study addresses how, in practice, counter-terrorism financing (CTF) rules affect women's rights organizing, women's organizations, and gender equality. The conclusions were based on research in 10 countries in Asia, MENA, Africa, Europe, and North America, and resulted in the following recommendations:

- Empowering young women and men for peace and engaging in nonviolent mobilizing for peace.**
- Countering militarism and investing in a resilient and empowered civil society to advocate for accountable and responsive governments.**
- Engaging with indigenous and marginalized communities to promoting women's rights and leadership in local governance and peacebuilding.**
- Supporting women on issues related to gender-based violence by providing**

psychosocial and legal support as well as economic empowerment (<https://www.womenpeacemakersprogram.org/news/risk-avoidance-for-whom/>).

- Advocating for women's rights through political and economic empowerment in post-war contexts, and providing funds to women's initiatives for peace and gender equality (<https://www.womenpeacemakersprogram.org/news/day-16-of-16-days-campaign-shrinking-space-the-impact-of-counterterrorism-measures-on-the-women-peace-and-security-agenda/>).

3. The Right to Food, Environmental, Indigenous and Land Rights

Indigenous Women

The following analysis was presented by FAR member organization Pacific Womens' Indigenous Networks (PacificWIN - <http://www.winism.net/win-pacific-network/>), which identified key issues for advocacy and solidarity such as protection of Indigenous land/waters/air and intellectual property/traditional knowledge rights; climate change; languages and traditional cultures; impacts of colonization and post-colonialism; treaty rights; and incarceration (First Nations people are massively over represented in the criminal justice system).

Indigenous Peoples (also, "Tribal Peoples, First Peoples, Native Peoples or autochthonous peoples") call themselves by many names in their 4,000-plus unique languages, constituting five percent of the world's population. There are approximately 370 million Indigenous people in the world, belonging to 5,000 different groups, in 90 countries worldwide. It is acknowledged that Indigenous Peoples are distinct populations relative to the dominant post-colonial cultures of their respective countries.

Indigenous territories contain 80 percent of the earth's biodiversity. Indigenous lands also hold unquantified megatons of sequestered carbon as 11 percent of the planet's forests are under their guardianship. These regions face an unprecedented and rapid loss of biodiversity and climate change effects, as a result of extractive projects such as mining, oil exploration, logging, and agribusiness. Many Indigenous lands have become biodiversity "hotspots". According to the World Wildlife Fund, 95% of the top 200 areas with the highest and most threatened biodiversity are on Indigenous territories.

Indigenous Peoples and Their Lands: Case of the Dakota Access Pipeline

The pipeline has been controversial regarding its necessity and environmental impact. Native Americans in Iowa and the Dakotas have opposed the pipeline, including the Meskwaki and several Sioux tribal nations. In August 2016, ReZpect Our Water, a group organized on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation, brought a petition to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in Washington, D.C. and the tribe sued for an injunction. A protest at the pipeline site in North Dakota near the Standing Rock Indian Reservation has drawn international attention.

The Trump administration's backing of the Dakota Access Pipeline project has set the stage for a new confrontation with native Americans and environmentalists. Within days of taking office, he signed two presidential memoranda supporting both the Dakota and the Keystone XL pipelines - telling the army to review one, and inviting a private company to re-apply for the other. They argued that the project would contaminate drinking water and damage sacred burial sites. Construction sites are technically just north of the tribe's reservation but the Sioux say the government took this land from them illegally in an 1868 treaty. Native Americans also accused the government of approving pipeline construction without consulting them,

a requirement under US law. Environmental activists say the pipeline would perpetuate fossil fuel production.

Indigenous Peoples and Extractive Industries: Case of #FreeWestPapua

The West Papua have resisted their invasion by Indonesia with tremendous courage, but their protests are still ignored by governments and corporations. The exploitation of resources and destruction of indigenous homelands continues. The United Nations has given diplomatic support to Indonesia in the case of the West Papuan takeover, and neighboring countries Papua New Guinea and Australia have followed a policy of appeasement even in the face of the military's worst atrocities.

From 1973 until 1975, the year of Papua New Guinea's independence, the Indonesian military stepped up its activity against the West Papuan people. Villages were destroyed and the population turned against the invading forces. Indonesia's cover-up of events in West Papua continued as the Papua New Guinea government tried to ignore the more than 10,000 refugees camped inside its border. On both sides of the international border, in Papua New Guinea and in West Papua, environmental destruction continues, with the participation of Canadian, Australian, Malaysian, Indonesian and Japanese logging companies.

Rural Women Producers

A fundamental part of the discussion about women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work relates to rural women. FAR Steering Committee member Mildred Crawford, President of the Jamaica Network of Rural Women Producers, prepared the following analysis (<http://www.wfo-oma.com/women-in-agriculture/articles/women-farmers-limited-access-to.html>):

Building rural women farmers' autonomy requires access to provisions stated in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, or the Treaty for the Rights of Women). Rural women in agriculture continue to be denied the right to inclusion in dialogues at all levels, in both government and non-government matters. Such issues should be guided by CEDAW, which clearly defines the role of rural women, with specific reference to women farmers' access to decision-making processes at all levels.

The lack of access to rights and services differs by geographic regions. The ratification of a treaty by member states can be acknowledged, but not enforced. In many instances rural women are excluded from these discussions. FAR advocates for all pillars of the Decent Work Agenda, which addresses rural women in agriculture and are associated with social and economic empowerment.

FAR advocates for social protection, including maternity leave, sexual and reproductive health and rights for rural women (CEDAW Art 14(2)c). Women in agriculture who are retired from hard labor in informal sectors do not enjoy pensions as there is no social safety net available for them in developed or developing countries. FAR also advocates for their right to capacity building (CEDAW Art 14-2d) and education at all levels.

Climate change has caused alarming impacts such as rising sea levels, intensifying natural disasters and extreme weather patterns. These impacts can only be addressed if we support small-scale farmers, especially women who produce food for local markets as well as those involved in fisheries and aquaculture.

A large percentage of women farmers cultivate in small parcels, giving the unequal distribution of land in many countries and discriminatory land ownership practices. They preserve ecological and indigenous knowledge in a resilience process to guarantee the basic right to food and land for their communities and countries.

FAR advocates for women's access to land, insurance in agriculture, capacity development, subsidies, and policies that preserve indigenous knowledge and natural resources, as well as rural women's access to healthcare, education, social services and retirement benefits.